

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed on April 19, 2005 ("Office Action"). Claims 23-44 are pending in the application – Claims 23-42 were rejected and Claims 43 and 44 were objected to by the Office Action. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Allowable Claims

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that claims 43 and 44 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Although Applicant believes all pending claims are allowable over the prior art of record without amendment, Applicant amended independent Claims 23, 32, and 40 to include limitations analogous to those in objected to Claims 43 and 44. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of at least Claims 23, 32, and 40 and all claims depending therefrom.

Information Disclosure Statement

With this Response to the Final Office Action, Applicant is including a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement and PTO Form 1449 for consideration of references cited in a related foreign patent application. The present Application incorporates by reference, claims priority from, and is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/301,994, filed November 22, 2002, now U.S. Patent No. 6,721,652 ("*the '652 Patent*"). U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/726,278 claimed the benefit of the '652 Patent, which was incorporated by reference therein. Each item of information in this statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a foreign application corresponding to U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/726,278, the communication being dated *May 6, 2005*, which is not more than three months prior to the filing of this statement. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner consider the references and provide the appropriate indication that the cited items were considered.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Office Action rejected Claims 23-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. While Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection and all the assertions and holdings therein, Applicant requests that the rejection be withdrawn in view of the foregoing amendments to Claims 23, 32, and 40.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejected Claims 23-28, 32, 33, 35-37 and 39-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,581,005 to Watanabe et al. ("*Watanabe*"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,270,937 to Link et al. ("*Link*") and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,728,392 to Joshi ("*Joshi*") and U.S. Patent No. 6,185,343 to Ikeda et al. ("*Ikeda*"). The Office Action further rejected Claims 29-31, 34 and 38 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Watanabe* in view of *Link* and further in view of *Joshi*, *Ikeda*, and U.S. Patent No. 5,541,845 to Klein ("*Klein*"). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection and all the assertions and holdings therein. But as with the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn in view of the foregoing amendments to Claims 23, 32, and 40, which include limitations analogous to those in objected to Claims 43 and 44

Applicant : Douglas R. Sanquetti
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CONCLUSION

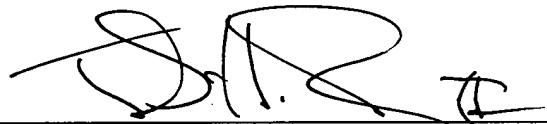
Applicants have now made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of all pending claims.

If the present application is not allowed and/or if one or more of the rejections is maintained, Applicants hereby request a telephone conference with the Examiner and further request that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney to schedule the telephone conference.

No fees are believed to be due. However, please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 05-0765.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: June 17, 2005

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TH. Reger II', written over a horizontal line.

Thomas H. Reger II
Reg. No. 47,892

Fish & Richardson P.C.
1717 Main Street
Suite 5000
Dallas, Texas 75201
Telephone: (214) 292-4084
Facsimile: (214) 747-2091